# Al Feinsod earns MMR #303

It has been rumored that when Al Feinsod, Jr. was born and his parents were bringing him home from the hospital, he made them stop at the local railroad station so that he could watch the trains. This was to be the beginning of a 70-year fascination with trains. Due to an injury to his leg as a child, he was not able to participate in outdoor activities so he turned to model railroading at a very early age. His first train set was a Lionel set that his dad helped him set up on a table in a spare room off of his bedroom. Many a happy hour was spent making believe he was a real engineer.

When he about 10 years old, someone took him to see a large O-scale layout in Westfield, N. J. This was his first time to see any model trains that were in scale besides Lionel. He knew upon seeing these trains that some day he would own some of the same. To this day he has kept a love for O scale. Except for a short span when he first started, he worked in OO scale for a short while but gave it up due to the scarcity of products. His present layout is located in a one-car garage and is a freelance connecting railroad. It occupies an 11x20' area.

He has been a member of both the NMRA and the Sunshine Region for more than 30 years and a life member of both the last two years. Locally, he belongs to the Sarasota Model Railroad Club. He served as the Division coordinator for the Boy Scout Merit Badge Program and he is presently serving as the Sunshine Region Achievement Program Administrative Assistant.

For approximately seven years, he has been scratchbuilding and entering his models in the contest at the Sunshine Regional Conventions. Much to his surprise, he was able to do quite well and

earned several First Place Awards and Best of Show Awards. About this time, he was asked by the SSR Contest Chairman if he might help judge at the various contests held at upcoming conventions. By becoming a judge, he was able to hone his modeling skills to a higher level. He would highly recommend this to any active modeler. About this time the SSR AP Chairman started talking to Al about the Achievement Program and asked if he had given any consideration to working towards his Master Model Railroader requirements. He had never dreamed that he could possibly some day reach the goal of obtaining the Master Model Railroader award, thinking it was beyond his capabilities. But soon after earning several AP Certificates, he began to realize that it was within his grasp. Before long, he had earned Certificates in Cars, Scenery, Civil Engineering, Structures, Electrical Engineering, Association Volunteer and, what he considered the hardest to obtain, that of Model Railroad Author. Now that he has earned the Master Model Railroader recognition, he looks back and and realizes that it took a lot of work but feels that the time spent earning this recognition was well worth it. It has made him a better modeler with the desire not to settle for second best but to always try and improve whatever project he may be working on.

Besides belonging to the NMRA and Sunshine Region, Al is also a member of the Baltimore & Ohio, Chesapeake & Ohio, and the Western Maryland historical societies. Belonging to these organizations is a big help to anyone who is interested in modeling prototype railroads. He is also a charter member of the local National Rairoad Historical Society Chapel.